special and extraordinary significance. I could invest that interview now with many dramatic features, but my memory, either because it is bad or because it is good, corrects my imagination.

" May I come in ? "

An ordinary remark, truly, to stick in one's head for thirty-odd years ! But it was made in such a *very* pretty voice—one of the most silvery voices I have ever heard from any woman except the late Queen Victoria, whose voice was like a silver stream flowing over golden stones.

The smart little figure—Mrs. Bancroft was, above all things, *petite*—dressed in black—elegant Parisian black—came into a room which had been almost completely stripped of furniture. The floor was covered with Japanese matting, and at one end was a cast of the Venus of Milo, almost the same colossal size as the original.

Mrs. Bancroft's wonderful grey eyes examined it curiously. The room, the statue, and I myself must all have seemed very strange to her. I wore a dress of some deep yellow woollen material which my little daughter used to call the "frog dress,'* because it was speckled with brown like a frog's skin. It was cut like a Viollet-le-Duc tabard, and had not a trace of the fashion of the time. Mrs. Bancroft, however, did not look at me less kindly because I wore aesthetic clothes and was painfully thin. She explained that they were going to put on " The Merchant of Venice" at the Prince of Wales's, that she was to rest for a while for reasons connected with

her health; that she and Mr. Bancroft had thought of me for Portia.

Portia *I* It seemed too good to be true ! I was a student when I was young. I knew not only every word of the part, but every detail of that period of Venetian splendour in which the action of the play takes place. I had studied Vecellio. Now I am old, it is impossible for me to work